

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MORMONISM

A Timely Discourse Delivered
by Apostle Orson F. Whitney
At the Cache Stake Quarterly Conference, Sunday, February 4th, 1912, at 2 P. M.

Continued from page 1

It is quite another thing for men to theorize, and to dogmatize, and to invent, or to create doctrines, as they have created deities, and ask men to bow down and worship them, and to accept them as divine truth. Religion has never suffered from the triumphs of science, but dogmatism has; false doctrines have suffered; the man made creeds have suffered, but religion—eternal truth, eternal knowledge, remain as it always was, and that is the rock upon which the Elders of Israel must always plant their feet. The Book of Mormon tells us in the teachings of the Prophet Alma, Alma teaches that God sends unto every nation, or raises up in every nation men of their own type to teach them that measures of truth that it is His will they should receive. Alma breaks forth in a rhapsody—a lamentation, you might say—saying, "I would that I had the tongue of an angel, that I might declare to all men the truth that God has delivered unto me, that so satisfies my soul." But he says, "I am only a man; I am not an angel." And this is the wish, the thought of a man's heart, the wish to make all men see what he saw, and give to them the same testimony that he has concerning the fullness of eternal truth. But he says, "that is the wish of a man, for God has shown me that He raises up unto every nation good and wise teachers to deliver unto them that message of truth that they are prepared to receive. I thought while President Smith was speaking this morning of an utterance by that great philosopher whom I have already named Emerson. The President was showing us the path that we must walk in, we, who have been enlightened by the fullness of the Gospel. He was building the platform for us to stand upon to teach the principles of eternal truth. He was not condemning science nor philosophy, nor anything that is true, and wise, and beautiful. He was simply warning us against the forms and the mists and the vagaries of men, falsely called science, falsely called philosophy and he warned us against those things and showed us the rock upon which we are expected to stand, and I thought of an utterance of that great American Philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson—some think him a cold teacher, and he is. He is as cold as an iceberg, but an iceberg is a great big thing. I am told that an iceberg floating on the surface of the ocean, though it be as high as a mountain above the level of the waters, only shows a small part of itself underneath the waves, a far greater mass of that iceberg is to be found than the part that is merely above. An iceberg can be a great big thing. And this man Emerson was a great big man, and a great thinker, in spite of his coldness. Emerson said, "what I most do is what most concerns me; not what men think." I consider that a great saying. And I have found in the writings of Emerson, in the writings of Carlyle and of Burns, and of Tennyson and of Shakespeare, and of great writers and teachers, something that confirms the truth, as I received it originally. But mind you, I do not go wondering after these things because I have any doubt of the truth that I already have, but I love to find in the teachings of great men and great women the truth that agrees with the truth taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith, because it gives me a power to approach men in the outside world who reverence that poet, or that philosopher, or that scientist, and who would not receive a blunt, direct message from me, testifying that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God. But if I can point out to them, in the writings of the men they revere, the men they respect and whom they have learned to love and to follow, if I can point them to the fact that their own poets, their own philosophers are teaching Mormonism, teaching what Joseph Smith taught, I think I have just that much more leverage and advantage and can have a better chance of securing their attention, at least, while I preach to them the gospel.

For many years I have taken a delight in reading the best of books, for the Lord tells this people through Joseph Smith to become learned, to seek learning out of the best of books, seek learning by study and also by faith. In every good book that I read I can find Mormonism; I can find something in that agrees with what I already have. I think I have read somewhere that Paul, the

Apostle, used his knowledge of the writings of the Greek poets and the Roman philosophers to help him in preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not because Paul doubted the gospel; he was but seeking confirmation of it from gentle sources, for his message was to the gentiles and he had to catch them in any way that he could, being crafty, as it were, or not one without guile; to make the most of things to all men. That does not mean that he was a hypocrite; that does not mean that he pretended to be something that he was not. When he said, "I reared a Pharisee, and it because of my hope of the resurrection that I am called in question." He had a leverage; he had an interest with them. Because the Pharisees and the whole sect of the Pharisees flocked around him and defended him, because he was standing up for something in which they believed. They believed in the resurrection; not as Paul believed it. He was just wise enough and crafty enough—if you choose to call it so—to turn his knowledge to good advantage. He could cite their own teachings and the teachings of men who had taught them, to show them that the message which he brought was reasonable.

But what folly for a man, after receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the fullness of truth, to go wandering after this "ism" and that "ology" in direct conflict with what he already has in seeking confirmation from outside sources, of that which he ought to have received by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. No Latter-day Saint, no servant of God, would hope to take such a position and be successful. No. We stand upon the rock of eternal truth, and it is to God that we are indebted for our testimony and our knowledge that these things are true. But if to save the souls of men we can use their sciences, their philosophy and prove to them that our message has been prepared by those very things, it strikes me that we ought to use every advantage that we can to gain ground, and to gain the expressions of men in presenting to them the Gospel of salvation—the one thing that will save their souls. What makes Joseph Smith so important a character in the midst of human kind? It is not because he was the greatest orator that ever lived; it is not because he was the greatest poet that ever wrote; it is not because he was a learned man, learned in the wisdom of the world. No. It is because he had a message from God and he told it as Peter did in days of old. Who was this unlettered fisherman, who could stand up and tell men what to do? Why, he was no orator; he was no poet; he was no philosopher; he was no painter; he was no musician, he was an apostle of the Lord Jesus and he delivered the message that God gave him to give to the people. That is what made him the important character of his time, more important than any other man of his generation. Joseph Smith is more important to this age than any other man who has ever been upon the earth since the days of the Son of God, for the simple reason that he could tell men what to do in order to be saved. The world was full of poets; the world was full of philosophers; the world was full of scientists, and musicians and singers on that day of Pentecost when Peter stood up and preached the first gospel sermon of the meridian dispensation. But what poet could tell the people what to do to be saved? What could Demosthenes, Herod or Cicero do when the people cried out, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now, the man who could answer that question was the great man of that time; he was the most important of that age; not the man who had the greatest command of rhetoric; not the greatest magician; not the greatest poet, or philosopher, yet all these men have their mission, subordinate missions to teach men a measure of the truth—but not one, not even Caesar upon his throne, could tell the people what they must do to be saved. But Peter could tell them. What did he tell them? He told them just what President Smith told us this morning. "Repent, repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that will tell you what to do." The spirit in man enlightened by the inspiration from on high. That was what Peter promised to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. It is written that three thousand people believed him and were added to the fold of Christ on that day. In these days a prophet has arisen qualified to teach us the fullness of eternal truth. They can call him nicknames; they can ridicule Joseph Smith; they can spurn his teachings, and call them unphilosophical; but he is the only man that has risen in two thousand years qualified to tell men what they must do

to be saved—and he is the most important man of this generation.

Read the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson; they are beautiful. Many a noble truth he proclaims in them. But in reading his philosophy you will search in vain for any pointed instruction, any direct message telling you what to do in order to harmonize yourself with God. Take the poet Tennyson, or even Shakespeare, and what can they tell you of the world to come? What can they tell you of the life that went before this life? What can they tell you of the purpose for which man was placed here upon the earth? They can philosophize on it; they can guess it is for this purpose and for that purpose; they can express the hope that all will be well ultimately. Joseph Smith could tell you just what you want to know. But some men cannot receive a message so blunt and so direct. God I believe, sends poets and philosophers into the world to teach men the measure of truth which they are willing to receive, and when it is the truth, all is well. But when any so-called science; any so-called philosophy, seeks to undermine and tear down the eternal truth, belittle the temple of truth, beware of such and turn away from them. If they cannot teach you, they will bewilder and mystify you. They are only creators, "will-o'-the-wisps" leading you into the marshes of despair and destruction. But when you find any philosophy or any science which harmonizes with the revelations of God, you can use that as a lever, as a means of moving the hearts of men, in spreading the truth, in filling the souls of men, who would not receive a principle, which is a direct and blunt message. Only a little handful of people, it appears, were capable out of many millions of receiving the fullness of the gospel. They recognized the voice of the Good Shepherd. It is a well known fact that there were men and women in groups, in congregations, waiting in various parts of the world when Joseph Smith came forth and proclaimed the restoration of the everlasting gospel. These men and women were waiting for it; they had been prepared for it with great visions and by impressions that the truth was coming back again. You could not make Methodists of them, nor baptists, nor presbyterians, nor Catholics, nor even infidels of them. They thought that something greater was coming, and it came, and it found them prepared to receive it, and they received it gladly. When Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde and Willard Richards went to England in 1837, whole villages followed them and were swept into the fold, because God had prepared the way for these men by the impression of his Holy Ghost. They received the message that God had raised up a prophet. It was not too blunt nor too direct for them; it was just what they were waiting for. It was the voice of the Good Shepherd. It was something they had known before. Did you ever know a sheep to recognize the voice of its shepherd unless it had heard it before? To state the question is to answer it. Those people knew all about faith, repentance, baptism and the Holy Ghost. Merely to transfer them from immortal to mortal beings and give them a body of clay, even that could not entirely dim their recollection of the eternal past. They received, as Cornelius received, in advance, it would seem, the Holy Spirit, with Christ's promise that it will bring things past to remembrance, and show us things to come, and they were prepared before hand, and when the voice of the shepherd sounded in their ears, perhaps through some boy standing upon a barrel on the street corner, perhaps through some poor man in homespun or buckskin in the thoroughfares of Liverpool, or at Glasgow, in doors or out of doors, by the roadside or in the populous street, that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and that the everlasting gospel had been restored. Some of those men and women halted to listen, though the great multitude swept by heedlessly. Some of them listened, and they said, "that boy is telling the truth," and it brought tears to their eyes, and they recognized him as an old time friend; they recognized the old time truth, something that they had known before, they had heard the voice of the shepherd before. That is why they recognized him again.

Science and philosophy, so-called, has been trying to account for trying to get around the Son of God, trying to get around Joseph Smith, treating them as obstacles in the way of progress, instead of being lights or torches along the path of progress. Some say about this Jesus, "we are willing to receive him, but not as the Son of God. We are willing to live by his noble and sublime teachings; but do not ask us to believe that he raised from the dead; do not ask us to believe that he walked upon the water; do not ask us to believe that he turned water into wine. No. We reject all that as supernatural, as mythical, unnatural. And, we are not going to the other extreme either, and believe that

man came up from the lower origins of the animal creation. We are rejecting unaturalism and supernaturalism. But we will take the middle ground and believe that he was a good, wise teacher, the wisest and the best that the world has ever known, and by his ethical or moral teachings we will live." Some ask us to do that, but what is the ground that they want us to stand upon. Why do they ask us to throw away the miracles of Christ and manifestations of divine power? Why, they say nothing of that kind is happening now and therefore it could never happen. When I was a missionary for the first time, things happened to me that never have happened since. Can you make me believe they never did happen? No, not while the world stands. They do not need to happen now. Circumstances have changed. They are happening to others, I have no doubt, just as they happened to me. They would happen to me again in like conditions. But shall I deny that they ever happened to me simply because they are not a matter of every day occurrence? Because I never saw the Father and the Son, shall I reject what Joseph Smith declared that he saw? In my simplicity when a boy I once thought that it would be a big favor to look upon the face of God, as Joseph Smith did. I thought that our Father in Heaven would be showing partiality if he did not appear to me, just as he appeared to Joseph, but I learned to put away those childish things in relation to that matter. I have learned that there is a spirit that distributes the gifts of God as he wills, and to one of us give the gift of healing; to another, the gift of prophecy; to another, the gift of seeing visions; to another, the gift of speaking in tongues; but these gifts come from God to us as God wills. While I believe that the Lord could speak to me and has spoken to me and has shown me the truth and has given me a testimony that this is his work, he does not give it to me in the same way that he gave it to Joseph Smith, neither do I expect him to do so. It took the eyes of a seer to see what Joseph Smith saw. He had to be specially prepared for that mission. In one of the books which I read the author says that Ralph Waldo Emerson was a seer. Why, he knew better. I was not deceived by that statement. It simply showed me that the learned writer has lost the meaning of the word seer. A man is not a seer because he thinks a big thought; because he conceives a sublime image. A man is a seer when he sees. What is Joseph Smith's testimony? He says, "I saw two glorious beings in the form of a man and they spoke to me." That is the greatest part of that revelation, of the first vision to Joseph Smith, and not in the answer to his questions, "which of all the churches shall I join?" and he was told to join none of them. But what he saw was greater than what he heard, for what he saw was restored after ages of absence, the lost knowledge of the true and the living God. The world was worshipping a god that had no semblance whatever to the God of the bible, because Moses said that God created man in his own image, and to Phillip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the father," the God of Paul who declared "that the Son of God was the express image and likeness of his father's person." The world was worshipping a God without body, parts or passions, a universal essence of spirit prevailing in all space, yet at any time a diet that anybody could comprehend. When you enquired about it they said, it is incomprehensible—a mystery.

Joseph Smith shattered it in the very first vision that he beheld. He saw two beings in the form of man. That was the restoration of the lost knowledge of God, and he took a man like unto Moses to bring it back. We do not half appreciate Joseph Smith; we do not begin to know what it means to be a prophet, a seer, and a revelator. He saw these things. Joseph says "they may cast out my name as evil; they may take my life, but I know that I had seen a vision; and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it." He never did deny it, and he died rather than deny that he saw the Father and the Son. I had this truth come home to me, not in my own experience but in the experience of my family in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when the Church was six months old. Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt and two others were sent upon a mission to the Lamanites, to the western part of the state of Missouri, then on the border of the nation. They stopped at Kirtland, Ohio, which was then almost a wilderness, and they preached the gospel to the settlers there and gathered into the fold quite a number, among them my grand father and my grand mother, Newel K. Whitney, Elizabeth Anne Whitney, Edward Partridge, Frederick G. Williams and others. These Latter-day Saints, after these elders had passed on, began praying for the coming of the Prophet to the church at Kirtland. One day in February a shay drove through the

streets of Kirtland and stopped in front of the store of Gilbert and Whitney. A young man sprang out and entered the store and he walked right up to the junior partner and extended his hand, and said "Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man." Grandfather gazed upon him in wonder. He said, "You have got the best of me; you have got the advantage of me; I could not name you, as you have me." The stranger said, "I am Joseph the Prophet. You prayed me here, now what do you want of me?" What was the explanation of it? Why did Joseph Smith know Newel K. Whitney upon whom his natural eyes had never gazed? Why could he say, "thou art the man, you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?" It was because he had seen him praying, hundreds of miles away, kneeling down by his bedside, and so distinctly did he see him that he knew him. He did not imagine it, any more than he imagined that he saw the Father and the Son. I am told that Joseph Smith could sit in his father's cottage when engaged in translating the Book of Mormon from the golden plates, and they could be secreted many rods away in the floor of a barn, and he could read those plates and declare what he saw on them, without the aid of the seer stone, which he used in the beginning of his ministry, doubtless as an aid in concentrating his mind. I could relate his prophecies and their fulfillment; his revelations and their grandeur and their glory, but you are just as familiar with those

things as I am. It is his dispensation of the fullness of times. As a prophet, seer and revelator he came forth and stands at the head of this dispensation. He restored the everlasting gospel preparatory to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth and the coming of the Son of God to reign over that Kingdom. And that is our message to the world; that is the rock upon which we must stand in proclaiming that message to the world, to all men, including the poets, the philosophers and the scientist, for the gospel is for all, for the high and the low, the rich and the poor, and it should be our study and our effort, my brethren and sisters, not to stir up antagonism between classes, but to help to inaugurate that reign of peace of which the prophets and the poets have spoken, that reign of purity and peace and good will, when all will be attuned with righteousness, when every man will meet every other man as a friend, and every other man will meet a brother and a friend. May God speed the day. Amen.

"Suffered day and night the torment of itching piles. Nothing helped me until I used Doan's Ointment. It cured me permanently."—Hon. John R. Garrett, Mayor, Girard, Ala.

FOR SALE, FOR SALE.

Rainbow Trout Fry. Prices and delivery guaranteed. Write G. W. Johnson, Murray, Utah.



Madam!—Looks on the outside are only surface looks—looks on the inside service looks.

While every stove or range bearing the "Buck's" Trade-Mark will more than satisfy both inside and outside looks, the better material used in their construction and the manner of construction will prove their service worth to you, and service is what you want in a stove or range—for looks is really a secondary consideration.

'Buck's' look good and they last a lifetime.

SIDNEY STEVENS IMPLEMENT CO.

Utah and Idaho.

Spande Furniture Co. Removal Announcement

On Feb. 1st we moved in our beautiful three story brick building recently purchased from the Consolidated Wagon and Machine Co. In our new home we will occupy all three stories and basement and will have about twice the amount of floor space that we had in our old quarters. This will mean more room to display our goods. A larger stock, better service and more satisfied customers. We are going to make good in our new home. We want your help and we are going to deserve it.

Spande Furniture Co.